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Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2157 (2014), in which the Council requested me to conduct a comprehensive review of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), to ensure it is aligned with the priorities identified by the legitimate democratic Government. In addition to presenting the main findings and recommendations of the review, the report provides an update on key political, security, human rights, socioeconomic and humanitarian developments since my update of 11 November 2014 (S/2014/805). It also provides information on the status of implementation of resolution 2157 (2014) since my report of 12 May 2014 (S/2014/333).

II. Major developments in Guinea-Bissau

A. Political developments

2. The political situation in Guinea-Bissau remained stable during the period under review, with the Government focused on implementing its immediate priorities and on preparing for the partner round table scheduled for 26 March 2015.

3. On 11 November, the National Assembly took two important decisions aimed at implementing its reform programme. First, it elected Francisco Benante as Inspector-General for the Fight against Corruption and Antonio Jesus Simões Mendes and Pedro Morato Milaco as Deputy Inspectors. The appointments were a positive signal that the Government is determined to tackle corruption. Second, the National Assembly adopted a resolution reactivating the ad hoc Commission for Constitutional Review established in 2010. The Commission will be chaired by the President of the National Assembly, Cipriano Cassamá, and will include Members of Parliament from all political parties represented in the National Assembly. In order to ensure broad participation in the process, the Commission will also include representatives from civil society and religious groups, as well as from the Faculty of Law of Amilcar Cabral University.

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4. The Government continued to take steps to reform the security sector. On 13 November, it authorized the Minister of Defence to establish a committee to review the list of military personnel to be demobilized through retirement. The committee, which includes officials from both the Ministry of Defence and the armed forces, has commenced its review of the criteria and lists for security personnel who will be demobilized and receive a pension from a planned special pension fund.

B. Security situation

5. The overall security situation in Guinea-Bissau remained stable during the reporting period. The new Chief of General Staff of the armed forces, Lieutenant-General Biagué Na N'tan, has gradually reshuffled the commanding officers of various military units since his appointment on 17 September. On 17 November, the President of Guinea-Bissau, José Mário Vaz, appointed Brigadier-General Antero João Correia, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, as the new Director General of the State Information and Security Services. He had served as the Public Order Police Commissioner-General before the coup d'état of April 2012.

6. Following a series of accidents involving unexploded remnants of war, as well as a request from the Ministry of Defence for UNIOGBIS support in the destruction of a stock of ageing munitions, an expert from the Mine Action Service of the United Nations was deployed to Guinea-Bissau from 4 to 15 November to assess the situation and make recommendations for United Nations support. The expert met with personnel from the armed forces, the Ministries of Defence and the Interior and non-governmental organizations engaged in demining. In his report, he recommended that UNIOGBIS assist in mobilizing resources from the international community to enable national non-governmental organizations to resume mine-clearance activities. He also recommended that UNIOGBIS engage with the authorities of Guinea-Bissau to secure the military's cooperation and support for an ammunition destruction programme.

C. Socioeconomic and humanitarian situation

7. Although the socioeconomic situation in Guinea-Bissau remains fragile, there have been some encouraging signs since the new Government was inaugurated in July. The salaries of public servants are being paid, with donor support, and there have been improvements in the supply of electricity and water, mainly in Bissau. On 9 December, the National Assembly unanimously approved a national general budget for 2015 in the amount of 148,000,000,000 CFA francs (approximately $287,380,000). A deficit of 57,000,000,000 CFA francs (approximately $110,680,000) will be covered by external funding. In September, the International Monetary Fund forecast a real gross domestic product growth rate of 2.5 per cent in 2014, based on the gradual resumption of investments after the return to constitutional order.

8. Cashew nuts continue to be the main export of Guinea-Bissau and one of the main sources of income for many families, especially in rural areas. According to provisional government data, as at 15 September Guinea-Bissau had exported

127,900 tons of cashew nuts in 2014, out of an export goal of 140,000 tons, at an average price of $997 per ton.

9. During the reporting period, some international partners and financial institutions pledged commitments to support the new authorities. On 13 November, the West African Economic and Monetary Union committed 510 million CFA francs (about $968,733) for the construction of a cattle market in Bigene, Cacheu region. On 18 November, during the meeting of the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau, which was held in New York, the European Union announced a commitment of 20 million euros. On 4 December, the Government signed an agreement with the World Bank to receive funding in the amount of $4.85 million as direct budgetary support and $2.15 million as support for World Food Programme activities in Guinea-Bissau.

10. No suspected cases of the Ebola virus disease have been reported in Guinea-Bissau to date. An inter-agency mission led by the World Health Organization (WHO) visited Guinea-Bissau from 14 to 20 November to assess the status of Ebola preparedness of the country. The mission concluded that Guinea-Bissau had completed 51 per cent of the WHO Ebola virus disease preparedness checklist on core principles, standards, capacities and practices for Ebola prevention and response.

11. On 2 December, the Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau, Simões Pereira, announced the reopening of the country's border with Guinea. The border had been closed since 14 August as a precautionary measure to prevent the spread of Ebola into Guinea-Bissau. The decision is significant for cross-border trade, especially for the communities directly involved.

D. Human rights situation

12. During the reporting period, no gross human rights violation was registered in Guinea-Bissau. Very little progress was made, however, in the investigation of, and in establishing accountability for, past serious human rights violations. One exception was the reopening by the Office of the Prosecutor-General for the investigation into the beating of former Transitional Minister of State for Transport and Communication Orlando Mendes Viegas, which took place on 6 November 2013. On 5 November, the Office of the Prosecutor General held a hearing to question three suspects in relation to the case.

III. Status of implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

A. Supporting an inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation process to facilitate democratic governance

13. The National Assembly has commenced efforts to reactivate the national dialogue and reconciliation process. From 31 October to 2 November, UNIOGBIS supported the organization of a three-day retreat of the Organising Commission of the National Conference on Reconciliation to review reports on the work that had

been accomplished before its activities were suspended in December 2011. Participants identified a number of activities to be carried out in order to hold a national conference on reconciliation in 2015. The Commission is expected to submit its conclusions and recommendations to the honorary committee for endorsement. The honorary committee is composed of the President of Guinea-Bissau, the President of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice, religious leaders and representatives of international organizations.

B. Assisting in strengthening democratic institutions and enhancing the capacity of State organs to function effectively and constitutionally

14. During the period under review, UNIOGBIS provided support to the National Assembly for the organization of two training sessions, held from 21 to 25 July and from 26 to 29 August, aimed at strengthening the capacities of the 102 newly elected Members of Parliament. The training helped participants to better understand their role and responsibilities as outlined in the national Constitution. UNIOGBIS also provided training on human rights and gender mainstreaming to the parliamentarians. Similarly, from 5 to 7 November, UNIOGBIS supported the National Assembly in organizing a three-day workshop to strengthen the capacity of Members of Parliament in State budget analysis and parliamentary control of the actions of the Government.

C. Providing strategic and technical advice and support for the establishment of effective and efficient law enforcement and criminal justice and penitentiary systems capable of maintaining public security and combating impunity while respecting international human rights and fundamental freedoms

15. The United Nations continued to play a coordinating role in the area of police, justice and corrections through the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections. In May and June, UNIOGBIS carried out assessments of the capacities of the Public Order Police, the Judiciary Police and the National Guard. The assessments established a baseline understanding of the status of security institutions in the areas of logistics, policy, procedures, training and inter-agency coordination. The assessments will assist in planning capacity-building projects. In the same vein, from 16 June to 3 July, UNIOGBIS, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Children's Fund carried out six border post assessments to gather information on conditions in the field, to establish a baseline for the design of future projects. The assessments showed that personnel at border posts cannot perform their duties effectively owing to poor training and knowledge of applicable national laws and because they lack proper office facilities and equipment.

16. Between May and November, with the participation of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and UNIOGBIS, the Superior Council for Policing and Internal Security Coordination, which comprises the heads of police institutions, held six meetings to strengthen coordination, information-sharing and joint security analysis among the various policing institutions.

UNIOGBIS managed the agenda and performed the function of the secretariat for the meetings.

17. Between 3 and 8 July, with the financial support of the Peacebuilding Fund, UNIOGBIS carried out specialized training on anti-riot techniques for 60 officers, including two women, from the Rapid Intervention Unit of the Public Order Police. UNIOGBIS also donated 50 sets of defensive equipment (shields, helmets and batons) for crowd control.

18. The United Nations continued to support the national authorities in addressing issues related to the right to health and the rights of persons deprived of their liberty. Between 1 May and 30 November, the centres for access to justice provided support to more than 1,120 beneficiaries (22 per cent of whom were women) with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). UNIOGBIS further supported the Ministry of Justice in drafting internal procedures for prisons to ensure compliance with national law and international instruments relating to sentenced prisoners and other detainees. Early in September, UNIOGBIS supported the distribution to prison guards and others concerned with detention-related issues of the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders.

19. Between 14 and 16 October, UNIOGBIS facilitated and funded a workshop on penitentiary administration and the rule of law organized by the Prison Directorate of the Ministry of Justice. In total, 25 prison directors, social workers and prison staff, including four women, participated in the workshop, the purpose of which was to increase the knowledge and skills of prison staff in the areas of penitentiary administration and the rule of law in accordance with international standards. Areas covered in the workshop included national and international norms for the treatment of prisoners, alternatives to detention and social rehabilitation.

20. With the support of UNDP, on 15 July the National Judicial Training Centre launched a six-week capacity development programme in the areas of civil and criminal law for 16 magistrates, judges and prosecutors. The officials were all assigned to sectoral and regional courts. In terms of justice service delivery in remote areas, UNDP assisted the Ministries of Justice and of Public Works in conducting feasibility studies in the Cacheu and Oio regions to identify suitable sites on which to construct sectoral courts. The construction of those courts in both regions started in December.

21. Between 28 and 30 October, the Ministry of Justice, with the support of UNIOGBIS, organized the fourth National Forum on Criminal Justice. Participants in the Forum recommended that a comprehensive review of the relevant criminal codes be conducted and that an interministerial commission be established to study the national legal framework governing military justice with a view to harmonizing it with the Constitution, international norms and human rights standards.

D. Providing strategic and technical advice and support to national authorities and relevant stakeholders, including in coordination with the Economic Community of West African States and its mission in Guinea-Bissau, in implementing the national security sector reform and rule of law strategies, as well as developing civilian and military justice systems that are compliant with international standards

22. During the reporting period, UNIOGBIS continued to coordinate with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the national authorities with respect to the overall reform of the defence and security sector in accordance with Security Council resolution 2151 (2014).

23. On 15 September, the ECOWAS-Guinea-Bissau joint cell in the Permanent Secretariat of the National Security Sector Reform Steering Committee presented to the Minister of Defence a draft proposal for retirement packages for military and police personnel. The draft indicates the number of military and police beneficiaries and provides details on their future benefits, including housing, medical and transportation benefits, based on their rank and length of service. It reiterates earlier plans that a one-time lump-sum payment be made on retirement, followed by a monthly pension over a five-year period. The proposal includes a list of 753 personnel to be retired in the first of five batches over a five-year period. The total number of retirees in all five batches will be 2,282 personnel. UNIOGBIS is a member of the Permanent Secretariat.

E. Assisting national authorities to combat drug trafficking and transnational organized crime in close cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

24. The efforts of UNIOGBIS and UNODC to improve the operational capacity and efficiency of the national investigating law enforcement agencies and to align them with international standards continued during the reporting period. Since July, a UNODC consultant has been co-located with UNIOGBIS to facilitate the full operationalization of the Transnational Crime Unit of Guinea-Bissau within the framework of the West Africa Coast Initiative. Together with UNIOGBIS, the consultant facilitated several training courses for Unit personnel. Between 15 and 26 September, 20 police officers, including four women, working in the Unit and in other law enforcement agencies received advanced computer training. Between 22 and 26 September, 10 police officers from the Unit and the Judiciary Police were trained in crime analysis techniques. From 27 October to 7 November, training aimed at improving crime analysis in relation to drug trafficking and money-laundering, particularly in the collection, organization, collation, dissemination and re-evaluation of data, was provided to 20 law enforcement officers, including four women.

25. Between 19 June and 21 November, the Judiciary Police and the Transnational Crime Unit carried out four operations that resulted in the arrest of six individuals and the seizure of 3 kg of cocaine and 57 kg of marijuana. On 14 October, the Ministry of Justice approved three standard operating procedures for the Unit and the Judiciary Police on the destruction of seized drugs, data analysis for criminal investigation and the handling of informants. On 18 November, the Government

made available a building that will host the office of the Unit. The Public Order Police, the Judicial Police, the Customs and the National Guard will be co-located in that building.

26. Between 24 and 27 October, UNODC and UNIOGBIS supported the organization of a meeting on organized crime and drug trafficking. The meeting, which was held at the invitation of the Prime Minister and the President of the National Assembly, was attended by over 100 participants from the National Assembly and the Government. The participants discussed drug trafficking, corruption, money-laundering and terrorism, as well as how to strengthen the criminal justice system in order to fight these crimes in Guinea-Bissau. At the end of the meeting, participants adopted a political declaration emphasizing the commitment of the National Assembly and the Government to work together to address the threats posed by organized crime to peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau.

F. Assisting national authorities in the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as undertaking human rights monitoring and reporting activities

27. On 4 and 5 June, UNIOGBIS supported the celebration of International Children's Day for 150 children in six schools in the region of Bafatá. The events included the presentation of films and discussions on the rights to education, health and protection from violence and abuse.

28. From 7 to 11 July and from 27 to 31 October, the Judicial Training Centre conducted, with the support of UNIOGBIS, the second and third phases of a series of one-week trainings on human rights in the administration of justice. Participants included judicial and law enforcement officials based in Bissau and the regions. The training focused on international principles related to the independence and impartiality of judicial actors, the rights and protection of persons deprived of liberty, the application of preventive detention and the right to due process and a fair trial.

29. From 11 to 14 August, UNIOGBIS held human rights seminars for 30 members of the security forces in regions of Bafatá and Gabú. The training focused on international and national human rights laws, in particular the United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, the national minimum standards for the treatment of prisoners, the law on female genital mutilation (adopted in January 2014) and the laws on domestic violence and human trafficking.

G. Mainstreaming a gender perspective into peacebuilding, in line with Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008)

30. Between 16 and 25 June, UNIOGBIS and the Islamic Council of Guinea-Bissau finalized a report on the roles of men and women in the Council's leadership and the role of women in mediation and conflict resolution in Guinea-Bissau. The report included the following recommendations: pursuing efforts to increase capacity-building for both men and women on gender and women's rights as they relate to Islam; identifying women leaders within the Council and empowering them

as mediators, based on traditional experience and international human rights instruments; and bringing women in the law enforcement sector and women leaders from the Council together to work on conflict resolution. The translated version of the report will be prepared and provided by UNIOGBIS to partners and the Council for further dissemination.

31. On 10 September, UNIOGBIS, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Women, Family and Social Cohesion organized a workshop for journalists, civil servants and representatives of women's organizations to raise awareness of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the National Action Plan on Gender. The workshop aimed at mobilizing the Government to mainstream gender perspectives into all areas of its work and to build national capacity within the public sector to review the Action Plan. The participants recommended reviewing the Action Plan and its implementation strategy, amending the electoral law in order to increase women's political participation and appointing gender focal points in government line ministries. They also requested the Ministry of Women, Family and Social Cohesion to work towards obtaining funds for the implementation of the Action Plan and to facilitate regional consultations on gender.

32. On 28 and 29 October, the Ministry of Women, Family and Social Cohesion, the ECOWAS Women, Peace and Security Network and UNIOGBIS organized a two-day workshop in Canchungo, Cacheu region, for 50 women from civil society organizations, public administration entities and political parties. The workshop sought to raise awareness of the need to amend legislation, including the Constitution, to align it with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). At the end of the meeting, the participants issued a declaration requesting the urgent adoption of measures on quotas for women, both in the electoral law and in the law on political parties, a review of the policy document on the reform of the defence and security sectors to ensure that it explicitly includes gender issues and the integration of human rights and gender equality in the national education curriculum to combat discrimination and the high prevalence of domestic violence against women.

H. Working with the Peacebuilding Commission in support of the peacebuilding priorities of Guinea-Bissau

33. On 14 August, the Peacebuilding Fund allocated $500,000 in support of a UNODC project aimed at reinforcing the electronic information-sharing capacity of national law enforcement agencies, including the Transnational Crime Unit.

34. The Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission and of the Commission's country-specific configuration for Guinea-Bissau, Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, visited Guinea-Bissau on 29 and 30 October to attend the thirteenth special session of the Council of Ministers of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP). Mr. Patriota met with the Prime Minister, the President of the National Assembly, the Minister for the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, the Ministers of Defence and of Foreign Affairs, my Special Representative in Guinea-Bissau, the ambassadors of Angola and the ECOWAS Commission. Discussions held during the various meetings focused on how the Peacebuilding Commission could best assist Guinea-Bissau in promoting the country internationally, support the new authorities to implement key reforms, notably in the security sector, advance the Government's

priorities, and support the mobilization of resources, with particular emphasis on the partner round table.

I. Contributing to the mobilization, harmonization and coordination of international assistance, including for the implementation of the national security sector reform and rule of law strategies, and enhancing cooperation with the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the European Union and other partners in support of the restoration and maintenance of constitutional order and the stabilization of Guinea-Bissau

35. My Special Representative has been actively working to ensure continued, effective coordination among international partners. He has started convening monthly coordination meetings with international partners in Bissau. On 14 and 24 November, he met with the secretariats of the International Organisation of La Francophonie in Paris and of CPLP in Lisbon. While raising awareness of the need for continued engagement in Guinea-Bissau, he also advocated enhanced support for the efforts of the Government to carry out State reforms, in particular in the defence, security and justice sectors. He further emphasized the importance of harmonizing the positions of all international partners and ensuring coordination of efforts.

36. On 18 November, the International Contact Group for Guinea-Bissau held its tenth meeting in New York, after two years of inactivity. At the meeting, which was attended by my Special Representative and key bilateral and multilateral partners of Guinea-Bissau, participants welcomed the progress made in Guinea-Bissau, including the strong commitment of the new authorities to commence implementing reforms in the areas of public administration, justice, education, public services and the defence and security sector. It also expressed strong support for a continued UNIOGBIS and ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) presence in the country and called on all international partners to actively participate in the upcoming donor conference.

IV. Cross-cutting issues

A. Integration of the United Nations system

37. During the reporting period, the senior leadership of the United Nations country team and UNIOGBIS adopted a road map for the preparation of a new integrated strategic framework (the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2016-2020) that will be aligned with the updated national development plan to be presented to the partner round table. It is expected that the framework will be finalized and endorsed at the country level by the end of February 2015.

Public information

38. During the reporting period, media activities were centred around a project funded by the Peacebuilding Fund on strengthening the media's watchdog role in a

democratic society. UNIOGBIS raised awareness of rule of law, human rights and gender issues through national radio programmes and the main weekly newspapers. From October to December, it organized seminars on institution-building in São Domingos, Bafatá, Buba and Bissau for some 86 media directors and editors, including the press unit of the armed forces, governmental spokespersons and representatives of civil society. UNIOGBIS also conducted a public awareness campaign in support of the Government's Ebola task force.

B. Staff safety and security

39. During the period under review, no direct threats were made against United Nations staff. Three burglaries at United Nations residences were reported, however. In the light of recent incidents involving the accidental explosion of remnants of war, United Nations staff have been advised of the risks and cautioned to be alert when working in the field.

V. Main findings of the strategic assessment on Guinea-Bissau

40. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2157 (2014), I dispatched a strategic assessment mission to Guinea-Bissau from 3 to 14 November to conduct a comprehensive review of the mandate of UNIOGBIS and ensure that it is aligned with the priorities identified by the legitimate, democratic Government. Led by the Department of Political Affairs, the mission consisted of representatives from UNIOGBIS, the United Nations country team, UNDP (representing the United Nations Development Group), the Peacebuilding Support Office, UNODC, the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Department of Field Support and the Department of Safety and Security.

41. The mission consulted with a broad array of interlocutors and enjoyed the full cooperation of the authorities of Guinea-Bissau. It met with national authorities, including the President, the Prime Minister and the President of the National Assembly, as well as ministers and secretaries of State from all relevant ministries. Meetings were also held with representatives of other State institutions, including the Supreme Court, the Office of the Prosecutor General, the Military Tribunal and security and law enforcement agencies. The mission consulted with political parties, women's associations, religious leaders, traditional leaders, youth representatives and media organizations, and visited the UNIOGBIS regional office in Bafatá to survey United Nations-supported projects and to engage with interlocutors in the region. Throughout the visit, the mission consulted with international partners engaged in Guinea-Bissau.

A. Context and main factors of instability

42. The restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau has introduced a period of hope. The elections in April and May were widely deemed to have been free, fair and transparent. The country has a legitimate, competent and inclusive Government. In meetings with the strategic assessment mission, the President, the

Prime Minister and the President of the National Assembly elaborated broadly consistent views regarding the key priorities of the country and the vision for its future. As a manifestation of this consensus, the government priority plan was approved unanimously by the National Assembly in September. The Prime Minister is working to create a collaborative political environment and has included several individuals from opposition parties and civil society in his Government in an attempt to build trust and bolster stability. The appointment of five women ministers, out of 16, including for the key Ministries of Defence and of Justice, is also a sign of political will for inclusive governance.

43. The Government has acted quickly, with the help of partners, to demonstrate the dividends of the restoration of constitutional order, notably by paying most salary arrears in the public service and by working to increase the delivery of public utilities to the population. Initial steps have been taken to reform the armed forces, most notably the dismissal of its Chief of General Staff, General Antonio Indjai, on 15 September. The Government has established a national technical commission in the Prime Minister's office to review the commitments made by the former transitional Government, with particular focus on the extraction of natural resources. The donor conference planned for 26 March 2015 will be decisive for moving forward on a number of governmental priorities and start the long-term work of stabilizing the country in order to focus on sustainable development.

44. The Government has shown strong political will to implement necessary reforms and, in doing so, is already encountering signs of resistance. The State-building exercise in Guinea-Bissau is in its very initial stages. The country faces extreme levels of poverty and the social contract is weak. A constructive relationship between the President, the Prime Minister and the President of the National Assembly will continue to be essential as they push forward the necessary reforms.

45. Meanwhile, the potential for relapse into instability and unconstitutionality will remain high as long as the root causes remain unaddressed. Since its independence in 1974, the country has never seen a Government complete its term in office. Coups d'état took place in 1980, 1998-1999, 2003 and 2012, attempted coups took place in 1985 and 1993, and alleged attempts took place in 2009, 2011 and 2012. The political instability in the country has been accompanied by repeated gross violations of human rights, including politically motivated assassinations, abductions, cases of torture, arbitrary arrests, detentions of political opponents and civil society representatives, and restrictions on the freedom of expression and assembly.

46. Peace and security issues in Guinea-Bissau are strongly connected with development challenges. The root causes of instability in the country lie in a complex interrelation of four main factors: (a) political-military dynamics; (b) ineffective State institutions and the absence of rule of law; (c) poverty and lack of access to basic services (particularly for women and youth); and (d) impunity and human rights violations.

Political-military dynamics

47. The armed forces have had a disproportionate influence on civilian and political life and have been able to shift political alliances, influence decision-making and topple democratically elected Governments. The power of the military

stems in part from a failure to convert the armed wing of the anti-colonial liberation movement, the People's Revolutionary Armed Forces, into a regular professional army after independence in 1974. This allowed military commanders to continue influencing political decision-making structures. It also contributed to a dynamic in which disaffected members of the political elite, in order to bolster their own positions and agendas, made alliances of convenience with the armed forces. As a consequence, there has been very limited civilian oversight of military forces and Guinea-Bissau continues to be characterized by an intricate web of relationships between the political, business and military spheres. In spite of the very positive change brought about by the elections, the rather small group exerting influence on key State functions still includes some who are involved in corruption and illicit activities, including human and drug trafficking.

48. The long-standing paucity of political and social dialogue among the people, political actors and the army has exacerbated the divides within society. There are indications that political factions have begun to instrumentalize tribal issues to their advantage, which could deepen ethnic divides. More specifically, it appears that the Balanta community, which is dominant in the armed forces, has had limited access to socioeconomic opportunities outside the armed forces; addressing this matter should be an important component of any reform of the security sector. With less than 8 per cent of women in the armed forces, and even fewer in positions of authority, as well as inadequate conditions (e.g. lack of separate barracks and equipment), the army is not equipped to attract more female recruits and to respond to the security and defence needs of the entire population.

Ineffective State institutions and lack of rule of law

49. During decades of instability, the politico-military elite has monopolized the State and effectively abolished the separation of powers. The rest of the population has been connected to the State through links of patronage at best and, at worst, not at all. Political patronage often takes precedence over fair competition and recruitment based on merit. Owing to low wages and frequent delays in the payment of salaries, public servants and the judiciary are highly susceptible to corruption and bribery. Outside the capital, the State is hardly present, which is why local political and social structures, including traditional and religious leaders, perform core functions that would normally be under the purview of the State. While these traditional structures play an important role in filling the gaps left by the State, including in conflict resolution, they perpetuate the lack of a relationship between citizens and the State, as well as between the regions and the capital, and in some cases exacerbate the exclusion of women.

Poverty and lack of access to basic services

50. The weak State institutions of Guinea-Bissau have been unable to deliver services to a population suffering from dire poverty. For decades, while the elite has competed for power and control over resources, the population has been denied the right to access basic services. The vast majority of the population, especially in the rural areas where an estimated 80 per cent live, has virtually no access to socioeconomic opportunities. Women are disproportionately affected in this regard, as they have limited or no entitlement to land ownership (depending on their ethnic group), despite constituting the greater part of the workforce in subsistence

agriculture. Maternal mortality rates in Guinea-Bissau are among the highest in the world and gender-based violence is widespread.

51. While Guinea-Bissau has the climate and soil to develop the agricultural sector, thereby driving economic growth and job creation, this potential has never been realized. Agriculture is limited to subsistence farming and the export of raw commodities (especially cashew nuts). This reality, which is disadvantageous to the overwhelming majority of the population, could be changed through investment in processing, packaging and related agro-industrial enterprises; this has been identified by the Government as a priority area to spur socioeconomic development. It is paradoxical that with an estimated 80 per cent of the population involved in agriculture just 7 per cent of the population is food secure. In addition, there is a dire lack of access to potable water.

52. Most communities do not have access to health care and education. In total, 64 per cent of women and 48 per cent of men are illiterate; in rural areas, those rates are higher, posing an obstacle to development and economic growth. The military coup of April 2012 led to the disengagement of the international community and a reduction of 55 per cent in aid for public investments in 2012. In addition, the coup undermined the functioning of State institutions from an already low level, thereby exacerbating the already precarious living conditions. The population has not been able to fully participate in the development of the country and has been excluded from the distribution of wealth as well as from involvement in State functions and decision-making, deepening a sentiment of disenfranchisement from the State and mistrust in the political leadership.

Impunity and human rights violations

53. The security and justice institutions of Guinea-Bissau are particularly weak, generating a widespread culture of impunity. The judiciary has little independence and limited means to carry out its core functions, especially the investigation of and prosecution for criminal acts committed by people in positions of power. The prisons in the country are not aligned with human rights and security standards. Access to justice for the population, an essential prerequisite for human rights, remains an important challenge, particularly in rural areas and for women. Less than 10 per cent of people who avail themselves of the justice system are women, although they disproportionally suffer from abuses and crime. Impunity constitutes one of the main threats to peace and stability, development and reconciliation in Guinea-Bissau, and amnesty has been the preferred instrument to deal with the serious crimes and human rights abuses that have been committed. Absent true reconciliation, amnesty has proved to be counterproductive, removing a deterrent to crime and human rights violations. The two-year transition that followed the 2012 coup provided fertile ground for the military junta and affiliated politicians in power to scale up unlawful activities. The population has little trust in the justice system, which is perceived as being ineffective, biased and aimed at serving and covering up the interests of the powerful.

B. Risks and opportunities

54. The main risk factors that would have a severe impact on peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau are the following:

(a) An unravelling of the political consensus within the inclusive Government and the exacerbation of tensions between the main political leaders could lead to a Government lacking sufficient unity to undertake essential reforms, increased military interference in the affairs of Government or, in the worst instance, a coup d'état;

(b) Individuals could exploit the assassination or sudden death of political or military leaders (and/or rumours to that effect) in order to enhance their own position at the expense of stability;

(c) A possible outbreak of the Ebola virus disease in Guinea-Bissau would have a negative impact on the population and on the country's already fragile State institutions.

55. Conversely, the current context offers the following opportunities:

(a) A competent, legitimate and inclusive Government whose leaders favour consensus-building and dialogue and that enjoys substantial domestic and international support;

(b) The political will of the Government to discuss and fight corruption, impunity, transnational organized crime and drug trafficking, as well as the strong regional links to combat such threats;

(c) The desire of national stakeholders to turn the page on decades of political instability;

(d) The commitment of international partners and financial institutions to resume cooperation and their positive reaction to steps taken on security sector reform, including, notably, the change in military leadership;

(e) The Government's commitment to increasing women's participation in decision-making and aligning the national legal framework with international human rights conventions;

(f) The continued presence of ECOMIB as a force for stability and security;

(g) The delivery of peace dividends and initial efforts to promote inclusive economic growth and the responsible exploitation of natural resources;

(h) The positive and constructive relationship between religious leaders and the role they can play in peacebuilding in general and in forging intercommunal tolerance in particular;

(i) The presence of UNIOGBIS and my Special Representative, who is well positioned to exercise my good offices and coordinate international support.

C. Priorities of the legitimate democratic Government

56. The main priorities of the country for the four-year period 2014-2018, as recently approved by the Cabinet of Ministers and adopted by the National Assembly in September, are set out below:

(a) To consolidate the rule of law and promote good governance and the reform of State institutions;

(b) To promote economic growth and poverty reduction;

(c) To promote and enhance human development through capacity-building;

(d) To revive efforts on foreign policy and regional integration and leverage the diaspora.

57. As articulated by the Prime Minister, the vision of the Government for the development of the country and the strategy for the partner round table contains four priorities approved by the National Assembly. These are:

(a) Government stability (through structural reforms, including in the defence, security and justice sectors);

(b) Industrialization of the agricultural sector (enabling the transformation of crops into value-added agro-industrial products);

(c) Investment in energy and transportation infrastructure (with an emphasis on clean energy, roads and ports);

(d) Monetizing and protecting the rich biodiversity of Guinea-Bissau through sound investments by credible partners (to diversify the economy so that it is not dependent solely on the export of raw cashew nuts and external aid).

58. During the consultations held by the strategic assessment mission with the country's leaders, three priorities of particular relevance for the alignment of the mandate of UNIOGBIS came to the fore:

(a) Facilitation of dialogue and building of trust between the country's main political actors through the use of my good offices;

(b) Provision of technical support for a national dialogue and reconciliation process;

(c) Strong mobilization and coordination of international partners to maintain internal stability and security in Guinea-Bissau.

D. Strategic options and areas of intervention

59. National and international counterparts agree that UNIOGBIS has played a crucial role since its deployment in the country and in particular in helping Guinea-Bissau to emerge from the crisis and restore constitutional order. While the mandate of UNIOGBIS remains valid, some modifications in the emphasis of its implementation are warranted, based on the priorities of the legitimate, democratic Government, as well as on an analysis of the comparative advantages of the United Nations integrated presence in the country.

Strengthen the coordination and mobilization of international assistance

60. In order to support the legitimate, democratic Government of Guinea-Bissau, there is a need to strengthen the coordination and mobilization of international assistance in the consolidation of peace and democracy. The strategic assessment mission observed unanimous and strong support for my Special Representative in convening and coordinating international partners. Given the lack of coherence among partners in the past, the current opportunity should be continuously nurtured and built upon. As part of its coordination role, the United Nations has been asked by the Government to help mobilize international attention and support and convey

the message that the Government is credible and willing to carry out key reforms. More specifically, UNIOGBIS and UNDP have been requested to support the organization of a donor round table, scheduled to take place on 26 March 2015, to mobilize sufficient resources to carry out key reforms. In addition, it is recommended that the Government establish, with the support of partners, as needed, mechanisms of accountability in the use of donor contributions.

Reinforce the good offices role of my Special Representative and support a national dialogue and reconciliation process

61. In maintaining the presence of UNIOGBIS, key interlocutors have asked for my Special Representative to take on an active good offices role to forge a constructive relationship among important stakeholders, as well as among and within the institutions of the State. There is therefore a need to reinforce the good offices role of my Special Representative, including with surge capacity if required. This role is essential for mitigating intra- and inter-party divisions, in order to maintain a united and inclusive Government, which is necessary for the establishment of civilian control over the military and the implementation of socioeconomic reforms.

Support the continuation of the Economic Community of West African States Mission in Guinea-Bissau

62. All interlocutors acknowledged the role played by ECOMIB since its deployment to Guinea-Bissau as a stabilization force with a strong deterrent function. At critical moments, the presence of ECOMIB has prevented the degradation of the fragile situation. To date, ECOMIB has been entirely supported by ECOWAS. The Government and other interlocutors strongly believe that the mandate of ECOMIB needs to be extended during this delicate phase of peace consolidation. ECOWAS has indicated some difficulties in its ability to continue carrying the financial burden of the Mission by itself, and support from other partners is under discussion. In the meantime, all involved interlocutors favoured Security Council endorsement of the continuation of ECOMIB.

E. Exit strategy

63. The current integrated structure of UNIOGBIS, in which one of my deputy special representatives is also the Resident Coordinator, is conducive to a smooth transition, as the United Nations country team will gradually take over tasks that UNIOGBIS is mandated with carrying out. In this context, the UNIOGBIS leadership, utilizing its existing strategic policy group, will regularly assess progress in mandate implementation. This will assist the United Nations in Guinea-Bissau in planning and prioritizing its resource mobilization activities, taking into account progress and ultimate success in the implementation of the UNIOGBIS mandate.

VI. Observations

64. Following the return to constitutional order after the successful elections and the installation of the national authorities, Guinea-Bissau is striving to move from

fragility to stability. I commend the country's elected authorities for the strides they have already made in addressing the basic needs of the people that they represent as a first step towards a sustainable peace. I also note with satisfaction that the political leadership and society of Guinea-Bissau as a whole are demonstrating their commitment to reforming the security sector, the justice system, the public administration and the economy. In this regard, a constructive relationship between the President, the Prime Minister and the President of the National Assembly will continue to be essential.

65. Notwithstanding this positive outlook, State institutions in the country remain weak and the root causes of instability remain largely unaddressed. I call upon all national actors to remain vigilant against the erosion of gains already made and to continue efforts to build political trust with the people. The consolidation of the rule of law and protection of international human rights and fundamental freedoms must remain a priority. I also ask that they continue to take all measures needed to prevent corruption, impunity or the use of Guinea-Bissau as a transit point for drug trafficking and organized crime.

66. The continued and sustained engagement of international partners will remain critical for the foreseeable future given that considerable socioeconomic needs remain unmet and poverty levels are extremely high. I call upon the international community to use the partner round table planned for 26 March 2015 as an opportunity to further enhance their engagement with Guinea-Bissau and to establish a forward-looking partnership. As one pillar of such a partnership, I encourage donors and authorities to support the Government in developing transparent aid coordination and tracking systems. It is important that partners continue to provide predictable and long-term support to help Guinea-Bissau make the necessary shift from its current economy, which is dependent on the export of cashew nuts and on external assistance.

67. At the root of the cycle of instability in Guinea-Bissau lies the fact that there has not been serious and genuine dialogue aimed at national reconciliation among the various stakeholders in the country. In this regard, I urge national stakeholders to embark on a path that moves the country firmly away from unconstitutional seizures of power towards sustained democratic governance. Achieving this will require an inclusive national dialogue aimed at finding collective solutions to the problems facing the country. I welcome the initial steps taken to reactivate the national dialogue and reconciliation process. I encourage all national stakeholders to ensure that the process is inclusive, addresses the root causes of instability and provides a solid platform on which to ensure sustained national reconciliation, political stability and socioeconomic development.

68. To ensure that the mandate of UNIOGBIS is aligned with the priorities of the legitimate, democratic Government, I recommend the inclusion of the priorities identified in paragraphs 60-62 of this report in the mission's mandate, namely: strengthened coordination of international partners and mobilization of international assistance; a reinforced role for my Special Representative with regard to the use of my good offices and greater support for a national dialogue and reconciliation process; and Security Council support for the continuation of ECOMIB, given its essential role as a partner to Guinea-Bissau and the United Nations.

69. I also recommend an extension of UNIOGBIS for a period of 12 months, until 29 February 2016, which would allow the mission to provide sustained support to the Government in moving its priorities forward.

70. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to the staff of UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team under the leadership of my Special Representative, Miguel Trovoada, as well as to regional and international partners for their continuing contributions to peacebuilding efforts in Guinea-Bissau.